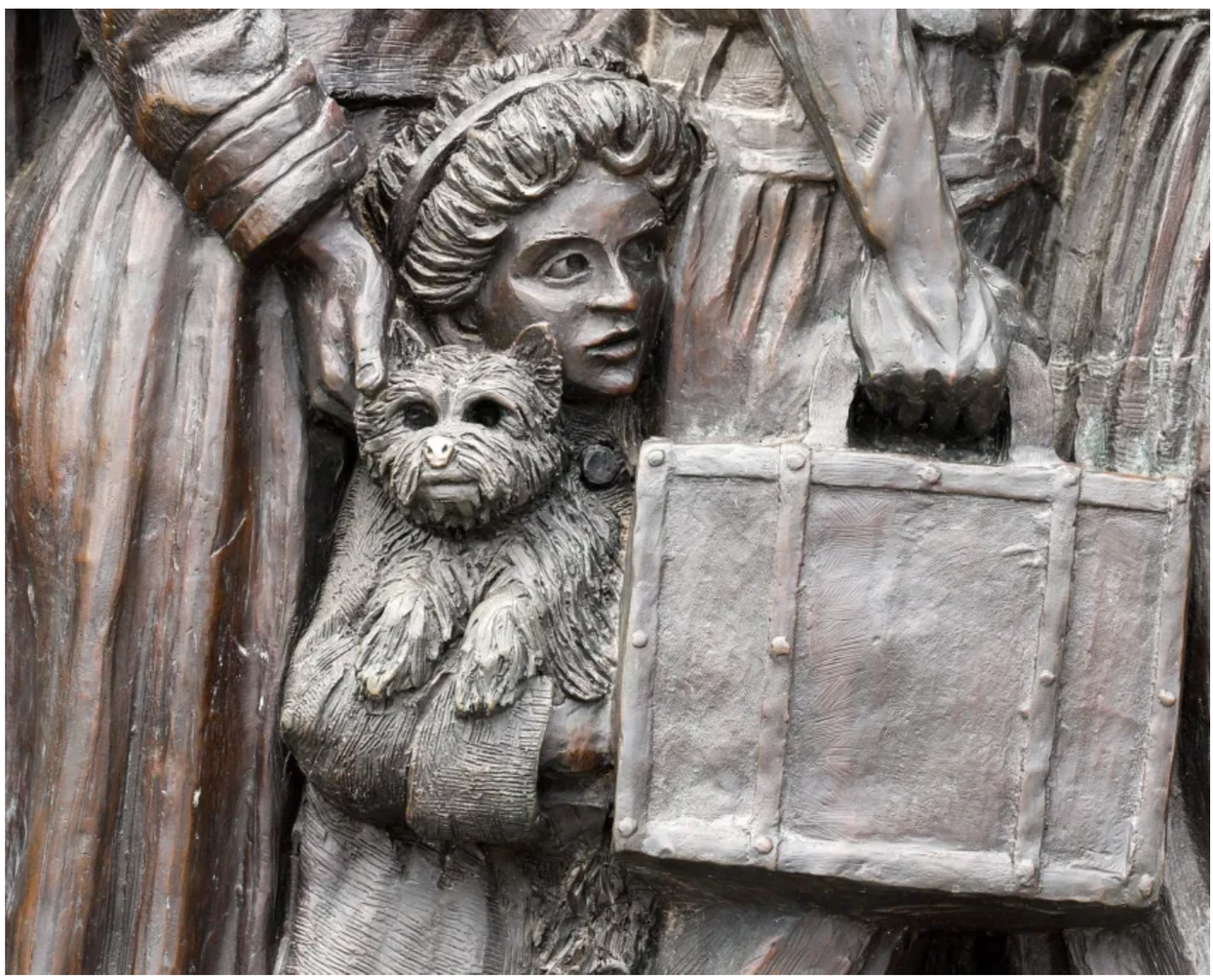
Pope Leo: Catholic migrants are ‘a true blessing’ to the churches that receive t

by Carol Glatz - Catholic News Service July 25, 2025



A detail is seen of "Angels Unawares," a sculpture by Canadian Timothy Schmalz in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, June depicts a boat with 140 figures of migrants from various historical periods and various nations. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With their courage and tenacity in the pursuit of happiness, migrants and refugees are “messengers of hope,” Pope Leo XIV said.

“Their courage and tenacity bear heroic testimony to a faith that sees beyond what our eyes can see and gives them the strength to defy death on the various contemporary migration routes,” the pope wrote in his message for the celebration of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees Oct. 4-5, which will coincide with the Jubilee of Migrants.

Migrants and refugees also remind the Catholic Church that she, too, is on a journey, and true citizenship is in heaven, he wrote.

“Each time the church gives in to the temptation of

‘sedentarization’ and ceases to be a ‘civitas peregrine,’ God’s people journeying towards the heavenly homeland, she ceases to be ‘in the world’ and becomes ‘of the world,’” the pope wrote, citing the founder of his religious order, St. Augustine.

Pope Leo’s message, which focused on the theme “Migrants, missionaries of hope,” was released at the Vatican July 25, the feast of St. James, the apostle.

“The current global context is sadly marked by wars, violence, injustice and extreme weather events, which force millions of people to leave their homelands in search of refuge elsewhere,” his message said.

“The widespread tendency to look after the interests of limited communities poses a serious threat to the sharing of responsibility, multilateral cooperation, the pursuit of the common good and global solidarity for the benefit of our entire human family,” it said.

“The prospect of a renewed arms race and the development of new armaments, including nuclear weapons, the lack of consideration for the harmful effects of the ongoing climate crisis, and the impact of profound economic inequalities make the challenges of the present and the future increasingly demanding,” the pope wrote.

“Faced with frightening scenarios and the possibility of global devastation,” he wrote, more people must yearn for a future of peace and respect for the dignity of everyone. “Such a future is essential to God’s plan for humanity and the rest of creation.”

God has placed the desire for happiness in the heart of every human being, he wrote.

In fact, he wrote, “the search for happiness, and the prospect of finding it beyond one’s place of origin, is certainly one of the main

motivations for the movement of people today.”

“Many migrants, refugees and displaced persons are privileged witnesses of hope,” he wrote. “Indeed, they demonstrate this daily through their resilience and trust in God, as they face adversity while seeking a future in which they glimpse that integral human development and happiness are possible.”

“In a world darkened by war and injustice, even when all seems lost, migrants and refugees stand as messengers of hope,” he wrote.

“In a special way, Catholic migrants and refugees can become missionaries of hope in the countries that welcome them,” Pope Leo wrote.

“With their spiritual enthusiasm and vitality, they can help revitalize ecclesial communities that have become rigid and weighed down, where spiritual desertification is advancing at an alarming rate,” he wrote.

The presence of Catholic migrants and refugees “should be recognized and appreciated as a true divine blessing,” he wrote. Quoting from the New Testament’s Letter to the Hebrews, he reminded the faithful not to neglect showing hospitality to strangers since, “through it, some have unknowingly entertained angels.”

Looking ahead to the jubilee celebrations and day of prayer in October, Pope Leo wrote he was entrusting all those who are on the move, as well as those who accompany them, “to the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, comfort of migrants, so that she may keep hope alive in their hearts and sustain them in their commitment to building a world that increasingly resembles the Kingdom of God, the true homeland that awaits us at the end of our journey.”